

**Town of Westford
Parks & Recreation Commission Minutes
November 7, 2006
27 Patten Road
Westford, MA 01886
7:00 P.M.**

The following are the minutes of the November 7, 2005, Town of Westford Parks & Recreation Commission meeting. A permanent set of these minutes (maintained for a period of six years) is retained in the Town Clerk's office. A set of these minutes and a tape recording are retained in the Parks & Recreation Department.

Commissioners Present: Colleen Barisano, Wayne D'Agostino, Ken Hanly, John McNamara, Carolyn Metcalf

Staff Present: Patricia Savage, Director, Sandra Habe, Assistant Director

John and Ken were welcomed to the Recreation Commission. Wayne gave a quick overview of his vision for the Parks & Recreation Commission. He believes the commission should be comprised of members from the youth organizations in town. Members are assigned tasks to work on as well as the opportunity to work on projects that interest them. Members are on the board for three years. John McNamara is involved with soccer and flag football. Ken Hanly is involved with soccer. The formal name of the department is Parks, Grounds, Recreation and Cemetery. There is a separate commission for the cemetery. Jonathan Revis is the Parks and Grounds Chief Operations. The Parks & Grounds staff work for Pat 30.2 weeks per year, they work for the Highway Department 22 weeks per year. They continue to work no Parks & Grounds equipment during the winter. The mission of the Parks & Recreation Commission is to set policy and procedures for all the parks and recreation fields and space for the town.

I. Approval of Agenda (7:10 p.m.)

Carolyn motioned to approve the agenda. Colleen seconded it. Motion passed unanimously.

II. Approval of Meeting Minutes – October 2, 2006

Carolyn motioned to approve the October 2, 2006. Colleen seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

III. Projects/Tasks

A. East Boston Camps –

Master plan committee meeting was held. Pat, Sandra, Colleen, Ken and Carolyn attended. Four options for use of the camp were given to the participants: no camp, no camp but the fifth grade camp, the historic use – EB Social Centers, Town run program or an outside agency running the camps. The meeting was set up to receive feedback from the townspeople. The committee will meet again Thursday, November 9th. The consensus was for a hybrid arrangement. The next meeting with the town is in January. In the original agreement the Hynes foundation wanted to allow the East Boston Social Center to continue for one more year. The Board of Selectman can make a determination prior to Town Meeting regarding the use of the camp for next summer – it is doubtful that they will do this. There are legal and liability issues to the town when the town allows other organizations to use the camps. Various members of the master plan committee have personal agendas for how they would like to see the camps used.

Parks & Recreation would like to offer environmental programs, as well as other programs and we would like to oversee the property.

a. Parks & Recreation – Nutting Road

- i. Wetlands flagging – The maps are completed. Kacy was supposed to sign the papers from Land Tech for the ANRAD to go before the Conservation Commission. This will delineate where the construction of fields can occur.
- ii. Field Development Plan – no new information
- iii. Neighborhood meeting – took place 4/26
- iv. Booster's/fundraising – no new
- v. Next Steps – ANRAD (Kacy)
- vi. Westford Academy Boosters/fundraising – no new information

b. Old Highway Garage – The Department of Environmental Protection requires documentation of the cleanliness and lack of contamination of the area. We were interested in having our office as well as facilities there. The School Department is interested in using the building. Town meeting voted about \$40,000. The Permanent Town Building Committee was supposed to determine each department's needs. We have looked at the old Water Department building, but the Water Department are still using the building and believe that we would create an environmental impact if we were located there.

B. VMC (Veterans Memorial Complex) – Carolyn is working on building additional tennis courts and has raised \$32,000 towards the project. Land Tech is designing new "as built", because the town is requiring it.

C. Properties –

- a. Jack Walsh – Affordable housing were interested in obtaining a house that was being donated and wanted to store it in the parking lot, temporarily. They could not give a definitive date for the move, and could have interfered with the spring soccer season. The cost of moving it twice was probably prohibited.
- b. Add "b" and "c" Lavalley and Tech Park West.

D. Marketing – Wayne's focus was to keep Parks & Recreation in the public eye. We have a weekly article in the Eagle. We will do an article for ice hockey and lacrosse soon. First Class is the new web-based communication tool used by the town. It is very powerful and should be a great improvement for the town. It will be activated for the town November 27 and in February for the School Department. The town calendar will be available for all.

E. Rules and Regulations Policies and Signs – remove

F. Credit Card – The finance director needs to make this decision so people can register on-line. It appears that we will have our own merchant account.

Add back the Town wide coaches rules policy. We wanted to look at commonalities between the organizations. The commission could also act as arbitrators between parties.

IV. Reports/Updates

- A. Programs** - The WPC is the largest program we have. It is an after school program at all six elementary schools. We are offering a program called the NASA challenge at both middle schools.
- B. Budgets** – Pat handed out sheets that explained the different budgets of the department. Revolving accounts are fee based. At the top of the page are the three budgets that you see at town meeting and are funded by tax dollars. Recreation, Parks and Cemetery are the items. Below the budgeted items are the revolving accounts. There are four revolving accounts operated by the department, two for programming, one for maintenance and one for WPC. The difference is 53D for recreation and the other accounts are 53E1/2 any interest goes into the general fund. Money must be used within and account unless it can be justified.

Pat used flag football and wrestling as examples of how the accounts work. Flag football is the first program budget to look at. The top of the sheet it shows revenue of \$20,632.37, expenses of \$12,134.11 and a balance of \$8,548.26. The remainder of the form is the detail associated with the totals. The other example is wrestling. Wrestling has an ending balance of \$1,163.20. The majority of their money went towards wrestling mats and most of that money came through a grant from the Exxon/Mobil foundation.

The next set of documents are the budget documents are the fiscal year 2008 budget worksheets, Cemetery, Recreation and Parks-Grounds & Recreation Maintenance. The numbers on the document shows the current fiscal year's existing budget. The 630 recreation budget has Pat's, Sandra's and Debbie's salaries, as well as other listed items. Longevity is given to employees after they have worked five years. Debbie's position is part of the CWA union. Sandra's position is included in the new union that is being formed. Pat's position is under the Town's pay bands. Pat reduced the offsets (paying back the town) because Pat removed the printing costs from the budget. Because we have the ability to raise revenue we can use the funds to offset the budget.

Parks and grounds worksheet shows the costs to maintain the fields. We paid the town back \$66,573.00. We actually gave the town back close to \$90,000 because we take all of our expenses from this line item and we over expend the account knowing that we will pay it back from our revolving fund. The reason is that the secretary at highway has to divide the bills between Parks & Grounds and Highway because we split the cost of some maintenance, for example truck maintenance where the truck is shared by both departments.

Part of the reason for the consolidation of Parks, Grounds & Cemeteries was the grounds portion the goal was cost recovery. There was a plan to go from 50%, to 70% to 100% of cost recovery of expenses on the grounds part. We have not been pushed to go to 100%.

We have shared employees so becoming a complete enterprise fund is very difficult. The Water Department is an enterprise fund, they collect fees and are funded completely through the fees. The Recreation Commission does not feel that it should be 100%.

We have been doing one special project each year for different organizations; soccer, adult softball and youth baseball. The next project will most likely be the Nutting Road parcel. We are working with Bob Conley because to build three fields will be a significant cost savings and the high school would benefit from in-filled turf, especially since that field is lit.

A capital item that Pat will propose for the budget is a building for the Parks & Recreation Department. We would place it at the VFW field location. We are in the process of looking at different pre-fabricated structures. Scotsman is a recommended company. Some selling points for the new building are it would be better insulated, the maintenance on the current building (new roof, general up keep) is cost prohibitive, plus the current building is not ADA accessible, has only one egress, no sprinkler system, is overcrowded, lacks storage space, etc.

We are asking for another staff person for cemeteries. This may be a combined position with highway.

C. Fields/Parks:

- a. Grounds – soccer season finishes this weekend. All of the irrigation systems have been blown out and buildings at beaches have been winterized. Highway building has been moved into. We use Fairview Cemetery building for storage for our programming materials and equipment.
The soccer association would like the grass cut later in the week so it is not so high on the weekends.
- b. Structures – Baseball plans to put a shed at the American Legion field.
- c. Fencing – no new information
- d. Parking – no new information

V. Old Business

A. **Central Permitting** – There have been many discussions regarding field permitting through recreation. Field usage would be prioritized as follows: Schools would have priority use, youth recreation programs, adult town recreation programs and any leftover availability would go to outside use. The Recreation Department is not concerned about having ownership of the fields, we are concerned with the care, custody and control of the fields.

B. **Nutting Field parcel** – We will be seeking CPC funds for the design of the fields.

VI. New Business

A. **New Business – no new**

VII. Next Meeting Date

The next meeting will be December 11, 2006.

VIII. Adjournment

motioned to adjourn at 8:57 p.m. seconded the motion. Agreed unanimously.